

Approved For Release 2002/07/02 : CIA-RDP73B00296R000100070018-5
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BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FOREIGN OPERATIONS
AND GOVERNMENT INFORMATION
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
JULY 21, 1971

I will review at this time the operations of the United States Information Agency in South Viet-Nam, Laos and Cambodia. I am accompanied by Mr. Maurice Lee, Deputy Assistant Director, USIA for South Asia, who from July 1969 to April 1970 was Assistant Deputy Director of JUSPAO and was Deputy Director until April 1971, and Mr. Charles Ablard, General Counsel and Congressional Liaison of USIA.

V I E T - N A M

The responsibility for U. S. Government information and psychological programs in South Viet-Nam is assigned to a civilian-military organization called the Joint United States Public Affairs Office, or--as it is commonly called and as I shall refer to it hereafter--JUSPAO. This organization, created in 1965, is staffed by USIA officials and by officers and enlisted men from the United States military services. Its director, a USIA officer, is a member of the Mission Council chaired by Ambassador Bunker.

JUSPAO has four main functions. I should like to begin this review by describing the traditional USIS information and cultural mission, the first of these functions. With the reduction of many war-related operations, renewed attention is being given to this area, and within the next twelve to

State Dept. review completed. On file USAID release instructions apply.

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- 2 -

eighteen months it will constitute the entire USIA program in Viet-Nam. In this function, JUSPAO produces material for use in USIA's publications, its daily wireless file, and Voice of America broadcasts. It places Agency-originated press, radio, and film materials with the Vietnamese media and distributes USIA publications. It publishes two magazines in Vietnamese: Free World, a monthly for the general audience, and Dialogue, a more scholarly quarterly journal distributed to intellectuals. JUSPAO also conducts an extensive cultural program which includes educational exchange, book translations and presentations, libraries, exhibits, English language teaching, and university textbook development.

In addition to this traditional USIS program, JUSPAO performs three other functions which are a part of the over-all war effort:

First, assisting the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam in its information programs;

Second, providing guidance and coordinating the activities of all other U. S. Government organizations in the information field directed at Vietnamese audiences;

And third, providing media materials about U. S. programs in Viet-Nam for use in third countries.

In addition to discussing each of these three functions, I will also review briefly JUSPAO funding and personnel.

- 3 -

First, I will describe the ways in which JUSPAO advises and assists the Government of Viet-Nam. Our activities in this area include the following:

- Assisting the Ministry of Information in the creation of the national radio and television networks, a motion picture center, and a printing establishment;

- Advising the Ministry of Information and its field arm, the Vietnamese Information Service, on management, budget, personnel training, and production;

- Producing radio programs and printed materials which are disseminated through GVN media.

Our assistance to the Ministry of Information at one time encompassed 41 projects. JUSPAO began to reduce these projects in June 1970, and had completed 22 of them by June 30, 1971. Another 10 will be completed by January 1, 1972 and still another 7 by June 30, 1972, leaving only 2 GVN assistance projects in being beyond July 1, 1972. One of these two is assistance to sustain the radio network; AID funds in the amount of \$10,000 have been planned for use in FY 1973 for procurement of essential replacement parts from offshore sources. The second remaining project is continued assistance to provincial branches of the Vietnamese Information Service by Province Psychological Advisors. The last province advisor is scheduled to be withdrawn not later than September 30, 1972.

- 4 -

I should like to elaborate on some of our major projects of assistance to the Government of Viet-Nam.

An important one is the development of radio broadcasting facilities, begun as part of the U. S. international assistance program in 1954. In that year the new Government of Viet-Nam assumed control of three existing French stations in Saigon, Nha Trang and Danang. The U. S. Government financed the purchase of additional low and medium-power transmitters to help the GVN increase the signal strength of the existing stations and to help establish stations in other parts of the country. When created in 1965, JUSPAO, in pursuance of its assigned mission to coordinate all U. S. Government assistance to the GVN in the information field, assumed responsibility for the management of this continuing radio broadcasting construction project. By 1968 the GVN's broadcasting network was capable of reaching 65 percent of the Vietnamese people.

Many of the existing stations were destroyed or damaged in the enemy's offensive at TET 1968. A new survey of radio broadcasting needs, undertaken immediately after TET, resulted in a decision by the U.S. Mission in Viet-Nam to construct a new group of four high-power stations which could be more effectively protected against enemy attack and which would be capable of reaching 95 percent of the Vietnamese people. Completion of these new stations is scheduled for October 1971.

- 5 -

The cost of these radio broadcasting projects, since JUSPAO assumed the management responsibility in 1965, has been \$22,713,000, of which \$9,326,000 in U. S. dollar equivalents was provided from the GVN's regular budget, \$10,873,000 by AID and the Department of Defense, and \$2,514,000 in counterpart funds.

Another major project has been the construction of a four-station television network, begun early in 1966 and completed in June 30, 1971. Telecasting began in February 1966 in the Saigon area from airborne transmitters. Now there are ground transmitters in Saigon, Hue, Can Tho and Qui Nhon which telecast for an average of 5-1/2 hours daily. The total cost of this project in Fiscal Years 1966 through 1971 has been \$15,878,000, of which \$6,122,000 was provided from the GVN's regular budget, \$7,664,000 by AID and the U. S. Department of Defense, and \$2,092,000 in counterpart funds. The total cost of this project to the U.S. Government does not include the expenditures by the U. S. Department of Defense in operating the airborne transmitters. JUSPAO has supervised a program for the training of Vietnamese in television skills, primarily through a contract with the National Broadcasting Company, International. This contract was financed from the Department of Defense allocation already mentioned. Most of this training was conducted in Viet-Nam, although six engineers were trained at the RCA Institute in New York.

- 6 -

A third major information assistance project has been the construction of a national motion picture center for use by the Ministry of Information to produce documentary films and newsreels. As in the case of the radio broadcasting network, this was a continuing AID project for which JUSPAO assumed management responsibility in 1965. The total cost of the project during Fiscal Years 1966 through 1971 was \$5,493,000, of which \$3,143,000 was provided from the GVN's regular budget, \$64,000 from counterpart funds, and \$2,286,000 in AID funds. This project was completed in June 1971, and no additional U. S. funds will be allocated to it.

A fourth major project was the construction of a national information printing house, for the production of newssheets, posters, leaflets, pamphlets and other publications by the Ministry of Information. This also was a continuing AID project for which JUSPAO assumed management responsibility in 1965. Total cost for Fiscal Years 1966 through 1971 has been \$2,594,000, of which \$2,203,000 was provided from the GVN's regular budget, \$104,000 in counterpart funds, and \$287,000 in AID funds. This project was completed in June 1971, and no additional U. S. Government funds will be allocated to it.

The national information printing house was not capable of producing materials in the quantities necessary for full support of programs

- 7 -

in which the U. S. Government had an interest. For six years JUSPAO has assisted the GVN by producing leaflets, magazines, posters and newssheets. This effort has been mainly in support of the Pacification and Development Program, which is administered by the GVN with the cooperation of Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS) and the U. S. Agency for International Development. Total cost of JUSPAO-supplied materials from FY 1966 through FY 1971 has been \$12,872,000 in U. S. dollars and \$2,586,000 in counterpart funds. The Ministry of Information has already taken over a number of printing projects, such as a weekly newssheet in support of the Pacification and Development program. JUSPAO's printing support of the GVN is scheduled to end in December 1971.

Most other direct U. S. assistance to the GVN information programs can be classified under the broad title "Assistance to Ministry of Information Directorates and the Vietnamese Information Service." This assistance largely consisted of equipment and supplies used by the Ministry of Information and its field teams in the provinces, districts, villages and hamlets. Total expenditures in this category during the six-year period Fiscal Year 1966 through Fiscal Year 1971 amounted to \$71,025,000, of which \$56,354,000 was provided from the GVN's regular budget, \$4,888,000 from counterpart funds and \$9,783,000 from direct U. S. dollar expenditures. This category of expenditures, most of which was provided by AID, has now been terminated.

- 8 -

The six large programs I have described encompass substantially all of the U. S. Government's assistance to the GVN in the information field. The total cost of these programs over the six-year period was \$133,161,000, of which \$77,148,000 came from the regular GVN budget, \$12,248,000 from counterpart funds, and \$43,765,000 from U. S. dollar expenditures.

Aside from assistance to the Government of Viet-Nam, JUSPAO is responsible for issuing guidance and coordinating with other U. S. Government agencies the preparation of information materials in support of U. S. objectives in Viet-Nam. JUSPAO provides detailed printed policy guidances, in the name of the U. S. Mission, to all U. S. Government organizations in South Viet-Nam and supplements them with oral guidance provided in national and regional conferences and informal meetings. Coordination of programs is achieved through the U. S. Mission Psychological Operations Committee, chaired by the Director of JUSPAO, on which all major U. S. organizations are represented.

Still another JUSPAO function is that of developing information materials on U. S. programs in Viet-Nam for use by USIS posts in other countries around the world. These materials include television news-clips, radio programs, news photos, magazine features, press articles, and background reports. They usually deal with U. S. assistance in support

- 9 -

of economic and social programs in Viet-Nam which are often overlooked by other observers who concentrate on purely military activities. The need for this third country effort has diminished, although JUSPAO continues to produce occasional features and background documents.

I have described the main JUSPAO functions. Among its many support activities, JUSPAO conducts public opinion surveys in South Viet-Nam. The surveys help us ascertain what the South Vietnamese people know and think about U.S. policies and to adjust our media output to give consideration to existing attitudes and levels of information. Our surveys ask such questions as what problems the people consider most serious, what they know and think about land reform, how secure they feel, and their judgments of when peace will come. To date we have conducted 45 surveys in South Viet-Nam. As a result of an Agency study which started last February, surveys taken prior to July 1970 are being made available to the Roper Public Opinion Institute at Williams College and to forty other academic institutions in the United States.

At this point I should like to speak about our personnel and budget levels. The JUSPAO operation has been, and is being, reduced. In FY 1970 JUSPAO employed 100 American civilians, 107 U. S. military personnel and 406 Vietnamese. By the end of FY 1971 the personnel ceiling was down to 86 American civilians, 98 U. S. military and 393

- 10 -

Vietnamese employees. By next June there will be substantial reductions in all three categories of personnel.

JUSPAO operations in FY 1970 cost \$11.1 million, of which USIA's share was \$6.4 million. AID contributed \$2.2 million in support of the radio broadcasting project, the information printing house, the national motion picture center, printing assistance to the Government of Viet-Nam and the provision of equipment to the Ministry of Information and the Vietnamese Information Service. The Department of Defense contributed \$1.4 million to the construction of the national television network. The balance of \$1.1 million was derived from counterpart funds.

In FY 1971 the cost of JUSPAO's operations was \$9.3 million, of which USIA's share was \$6 million. AID's share was \$1.3 million and DOD's share was \$0.7 million. The balance of \$1.3 million was derived from counterpart funds.

For FY 1972 we have forecast a JUSPAO operating budget of \$8.5 million, of which USIA's share is \$6.3 million, the remainder being derived from AID and counterpart funds. The JUSPAO budget will be further reduced in the coming months as the process of Vietnamization is accelerated.

I have been asked to address the subject of the effectiveness of JUSPAO's programs in South Viet-Nam. As I have noted, one of JUSPAO's main objectives has been to help the Government of Viet-Nam to create

- 11 -

means of communicating with the Vietnamese people. A national radio network, a national television network, a motion picture center and a printing plant are now in place and operating. The Ministry of Information personnel who operate these media are able to keep them operating--not up to U. S. standards, perhaps--but operating. These facilities helped to keep the South Vietnamese people informed during critical periods such as the 1968 Communist offensive. The GVN's ability to inform its people on a whole spectrum of programs ranging from land reform to local defense has increased during the past six years. These are programs which have received strong American support over the years.

Second, there is the Chieu Hoi, or Open Arms Program, under which Viet Cong and North Vietnamese soldiers are encouraged to leave the insurgency and rally to the Government of Viet-Nam. Some 183,000 members of the enemy forces have defected since the inception of the program in 1963. These defections have reduced enemy manpower, while defectors have contributed valuable intelligence, uncovered many enemy ammunition caches, and acted as scouts for GVN and Allied armed units.

Although these results represent the work of various U. S. and GVN agencies, JUSPAO played an important role in the conception, organization and operation of this program.

- 12 -

L A O S

To move on to Laos. The USIS program there includes contact with key individuals, production and distribution of information materials to media outlets, support of bi-national information centers in Vientiane and two provincial cities, and educational exchanges. The general objective of the program is to promote Lao awareness of the U. S. contribution to Laotian stability and independence.

Because of the degree to which U. S. interests are involved in Laos at the present time, USIA devotes more resources to its programs there than it ordinarily would to a developing country with only 2.5 million inhabitants. In FY 1970, USIS Laos was staffed by 15 Americans and 72 foreign nationals, and in FY 1971 by 14 Americans and 72 foreign nationals. The cost of the program was \$1,285,000 in FY 1970 and \$1,281,000 in FY 1971. Although we originally estimated a USIA budget of \$1,307,000 in FY 1972, we are now reviewing the programs again. We expect to be able to reduce this budget. Our present thinking is that by the end of FY 1972, USIS Laos will be staffed with 9 Americans and 41 foreign nationals.

These reductions have resulted from a fundamental redefinition of the USIS role in Laos. As in Viet-Nam, USIS Laos was involved in supporting

- 13 -

the Royal Lao Government's internal information effort. The post has gradually phased out this support by assisting the RLG through advice and training to take over and continue some activities. These include all radio programs in support of Lao themes, production of a monthly magazine and a weekly wall newspaper, and film showings in rural areas.

During the program changeover, USIS Laos continued a number of activities which USIA considered as part of a normal, conventional USIS program. These include production of exhibits for use in bi-national centers and fairs and placement of news and feature materials with the Vientiane press. The USIS press officer functions as the Embassy's Press Attache' and Mission spokesman, working with resident and visiting foreign correspondents. A small radio section produces materials for the Lao Service of the Voice of America and some programming of U. S. themes for placement with Lao radio stations. The educational and cultural exchange program includes eight American teachers of English for the Lycees, six International Visitor grants, and three Lao undergraduates at American universities. USIS Laos maintains a 5,000 volume library. USIS works with the Lao-American Association in a bi-national program of cultural activities which include teaching of English to 2500 students in the Vientiane center and to 1100 students in two provincial centers.

- 14 -

C A M B O D I A

Our operations in Cambodia are limited. In the spring of 1970, when over 100 foreign correspondents, many of them American, went to Phnom Penh, a Press Attache' was sent at the request of the Charge' to assist in press briefings. In September, when a new Ambassador had arrived and the Embassy staff and our military assistance programs had greatly expanded, an additional information officer position was established to assist the Embassy in the public affairs and cultural fields.

These two officers brief the international and local press, provide information on U. S. policy to Cambodian media, distribute wireless file items, and operate a film loan service. A student exchange program has also been established.

The two USIS officers provide advice to the American Ambassador on the public affairs aspects of U. S. activities in Cambodia. They are assisted by five Cambodian employees presently on board. Total expenditures, including salaries and housing, during FY 1971 were \$195,828. Anticipated expenses for FY 1972 are \$209,195.